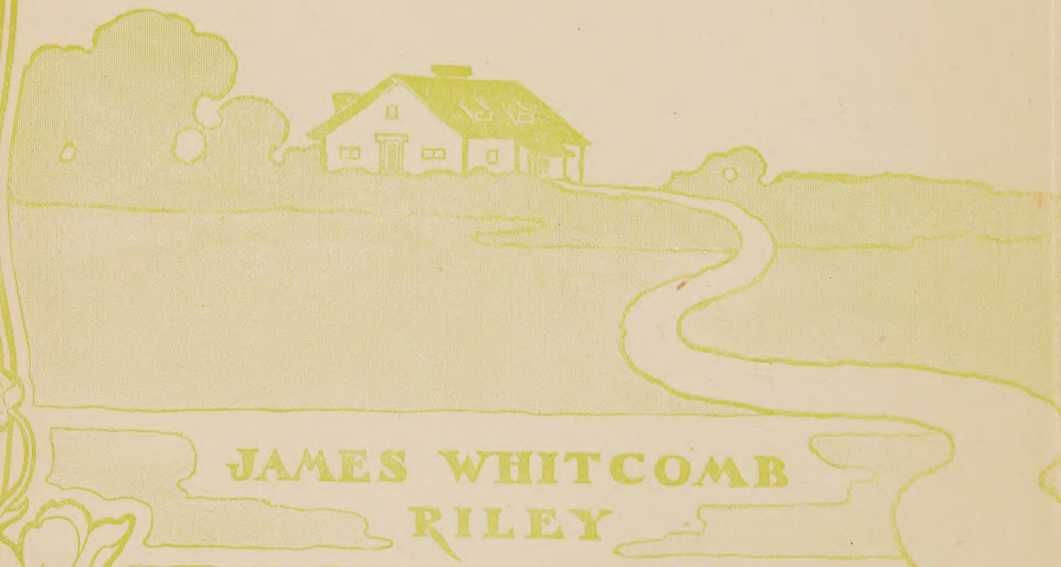
OUT TO OLD AUNT MARY'S

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

Out to Old Aunt Mary's



JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

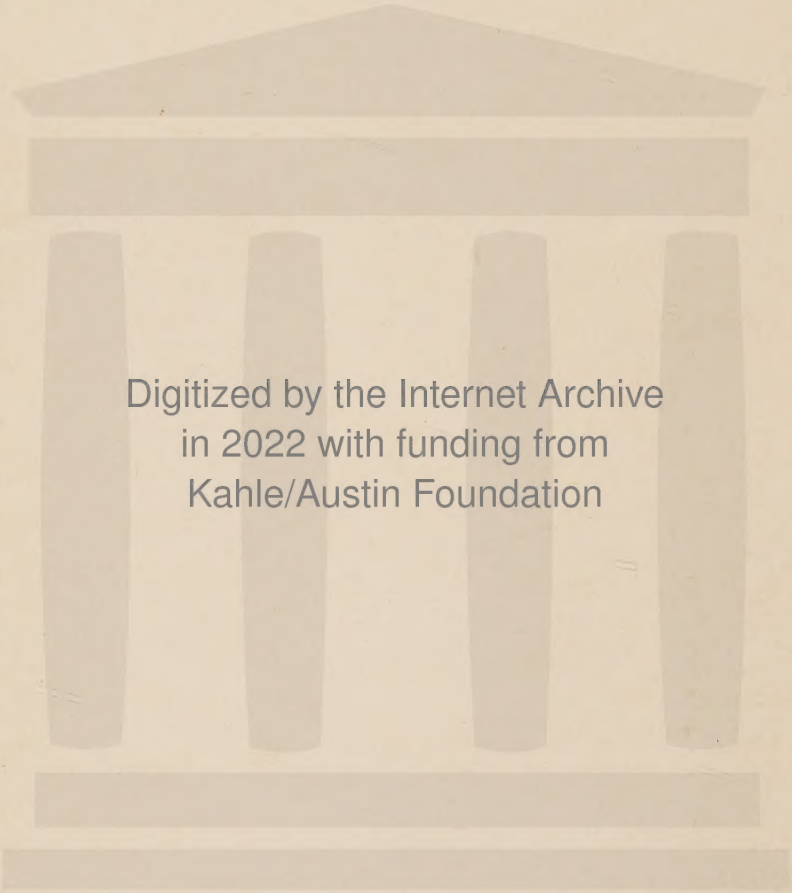
WITH STUDIES FROM NATURE

HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

From Mrs Luskey
to Norma 1926.

Clara Everett.

Out to Old Aunt Mary's



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Out to Old Aunt Mary's

By

James Whitcomb Riley

Drawings by

Howard Chandler Christy

Decorations by

Margaret Armstrong

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TO

ROBERT J. BURDETTE

WITH ALL GRATEFULNESS

AND AFFECTION

You who have journeyed the wide world through–
Knowing the Old World as the New,–
Cruise or pilgrimage or shrine,
Found you ever so all-divine
A haven as first was yours and mine
Out to old Aunt Mary's?

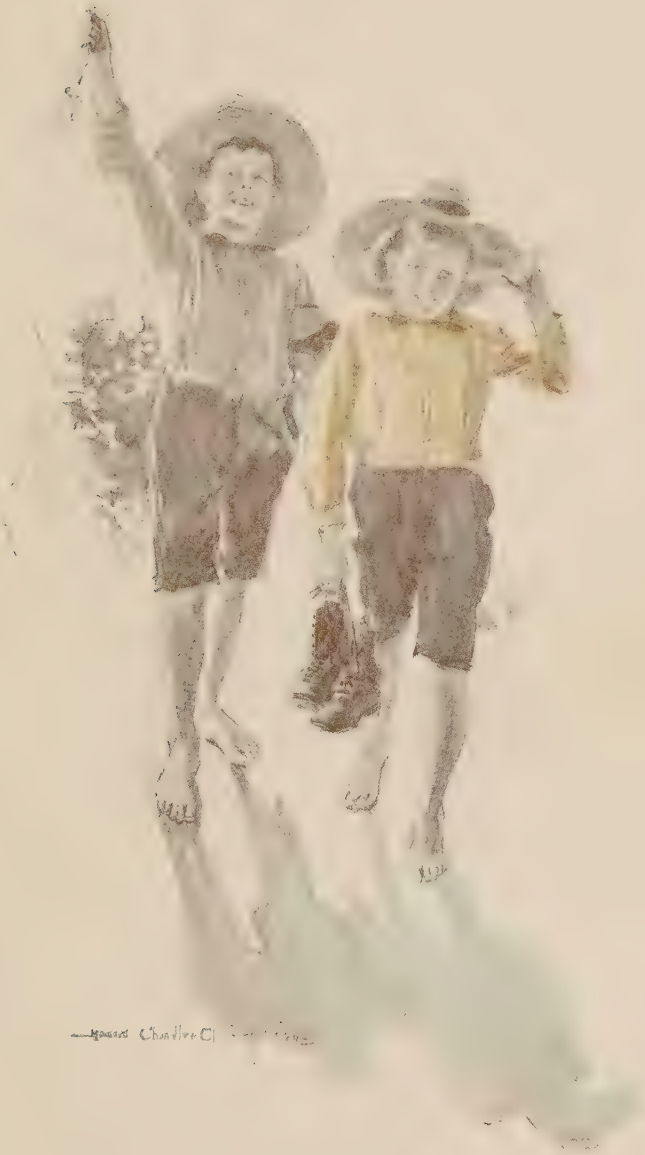
Out to Old Aunt Mary's

In those old days of the lost sunshine
Of youth

Wasn't it pleasant, O brother mine,
In those old days of the lost sunshine
Of youth—when the Saturday's
chores were through,
And the "Sunday's wood" in the kitchen, too,
And we went visiting, "me and you",
Out to old Aunt Mary's?—

The scent of the cherry-blossoms blown
After us, in the roadway lone

"Me and you"—And the morning fair,
With the dewdrops twinkling everywhere;
The scent of the cherry-blossoms blown
After us, in the roadway lone,
Our capering shadows onward thrown—
Out to old Aunt Mary's!



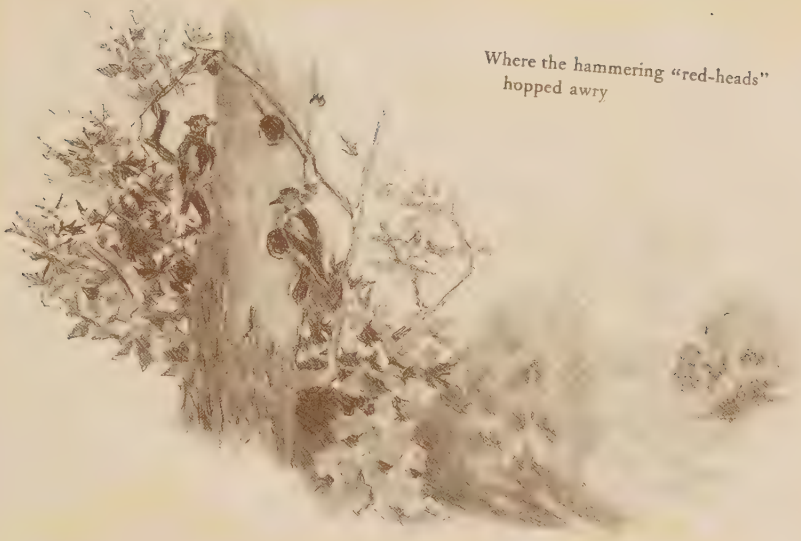
Out by the barn-lot and down the lane
We patter along in the dust again

It all comes back so clear to-day!
Though I am as bald as you are gray,—
Out by the barn-lot and down the lane
We patter along in the dust again,
As light as the tips of the drops of the rain,
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

– Howard Chandler Christy pinx. – 30

Loitering, awed, o'er pool and shoal,
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

The few last houses of the town;
Then on, up the high creek-bluffs and down;
Past the squat tollgate, with its well-sweep pole;
The bridge, and "The old 'Babtizin'-hole'",
Loitering, awed, o'er pool and shoal,
Out to old Aunt Mary's.



Where the hammering "red-heads"
hopped awry

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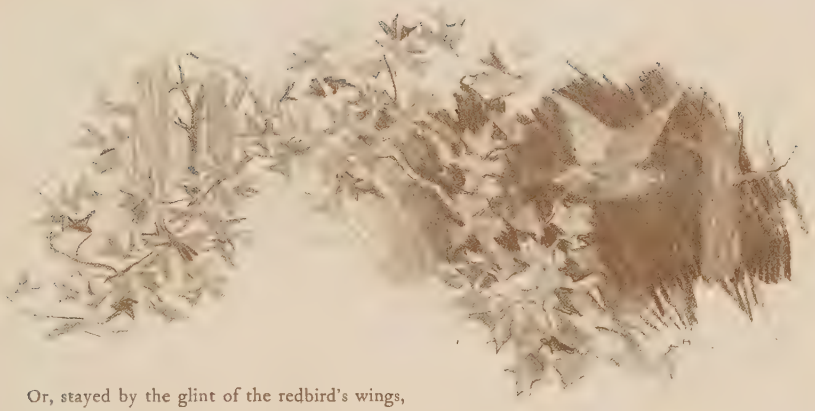
We cross the pasture, and through the wood,
Where the old gray snag of the poplar stood
Where the hammering "red-heads"
hopped awry,
And the buzzard "raised" in the "clearing"-sky
And lolled and circled, as we went by
Out to old Aunt Mary's.



Or, stayed by the glint of the redbird's wings,
Or the glitter of song that the bluebird sings.

Or, stayed by the glint of the redbird's wings,
Or the glitter of song that the bluebird sings,
All hushed we feign to strike strange trails,
As the "big braves" do in the Indian tales,
Till again our real quest lags and fails—
Out to old Aunt Mary's.—

Chasing each other from tree to tree
Out to old Aunt Mary's

And the woodland echoes with yells of mirth
That make old war-whoops of minor worth! . .
Where such heroes of war as we?—
With bows and arrows of fantasy,
Chasing each other from tree to tree
Out to old Aunt Mary's!

Our cares behind, and our hearts ahead
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

And then in the dust of the road again;
And the teams we met, and the countrymen;
And the long highway, with sunshine spread
As thick as butter on country bread,
Our cares behind, and our hearts ahead
Out to old Aunt Mary's.—

Where dwelt our Saint in her simple cot—
Out to old Aunt Mary's

For only, now, at the road's next bend
To the right we could make out the gable-end
Of the fine old Huston homestead—not
Half a mile from the sacred spot
Where dwelt our Saint in her simple cot—
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

And wasn't it good for a boy to be
Out to old Aunt Mary's

Why, I see her now in the open door
Where the little gourds grew up the sides and o'er
The clapboard roof!—And her face—ah, me!
Wasn't it good for a boy to see—
And wasn't it good for a boy to be
Out to old Aunt Mary's?—

Howard Chandler C

The jelly—the jam and the marmalade,
And the cherry- and quince-"preserves" she made

The jelly—the jam and the marmalade,
And the cherry- and quince-"preserves" she made!
And the sweet-sour pickles of peach and pear,
With cinnamon in 'em, and all things rare!—
And the more we ate was the more to spare,
Out to old Aunt Mary's!

Frederick Chandler Christy 1904.

Just for the visiting children's sake—
Out to old Aunt Mary's

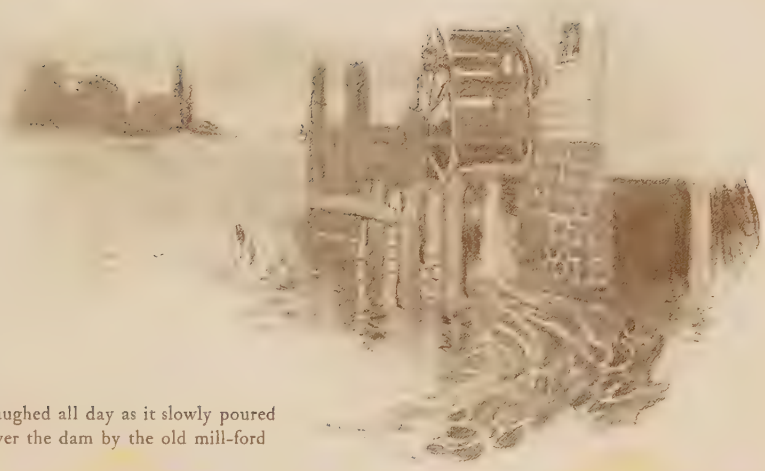
Ah! was there, ever, so kind a face
And gentle as hers, or such a grace
Of welcoming, as she cut the cake
Or the juicy pies that she joyed to make
Just for the visiting children's sake—
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

"The honey, too, in its amber comb
One only finds in an old farm-home

The honey, too, in its amber comb
One only finds in an old farm-home;
And the coffee, fragrant and sweet, and ho!
So hot that we gloried to drink it so,
With spangles of tears in our eyes, you know—
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

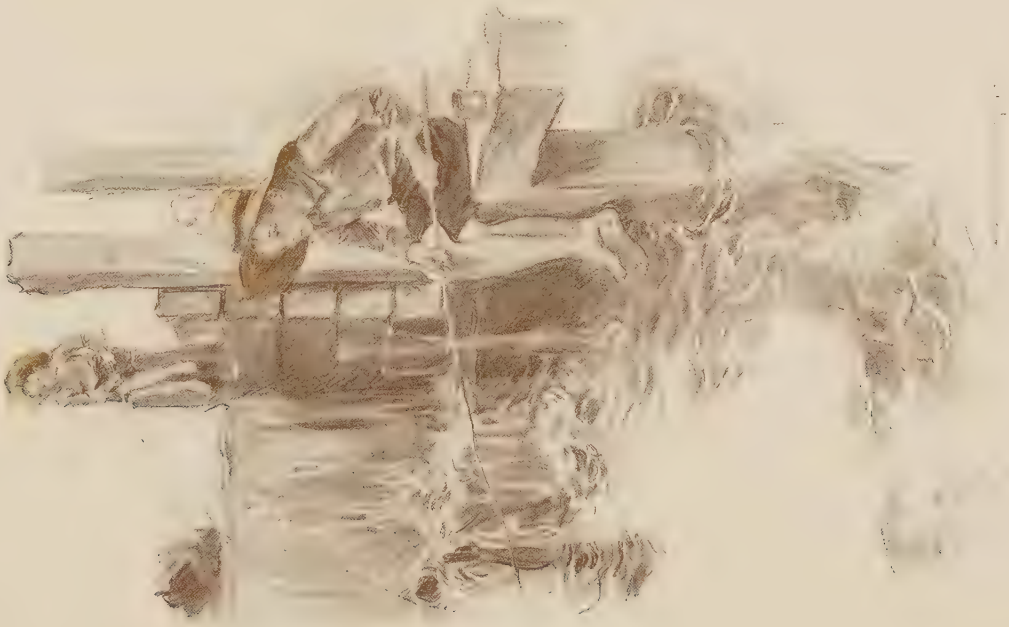
Or was it the grove, with its leafy breeze,
Or the dim hay-mow, with its fragrancies

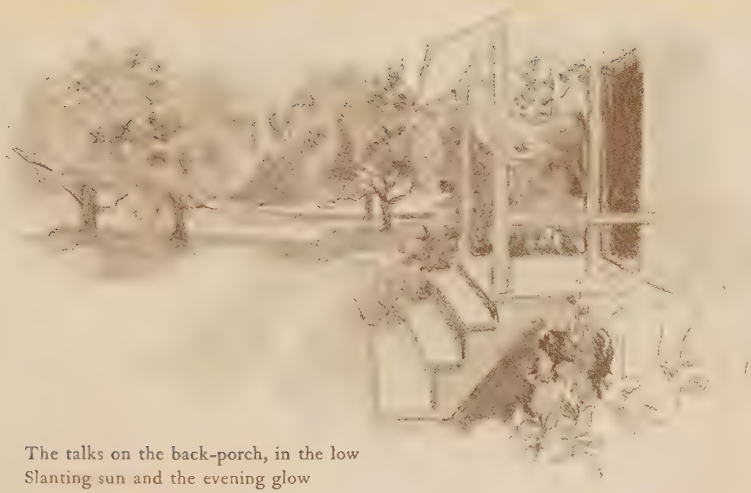
And the romps we took, in our glad unrest!—
Was it the lawn that we loved the best,
With its swooping swing in the locust trees,
Or was it the grove, with its leafy breeze,
Or the dim hay-mow, with its fragrancies—
Out to old Aunt Mary's.



Laughed all day as it slowly poured
Over the dam by the old mill-ford

Far fields, bottom-lands, creek-banks—all,
We ranged at will.—Where the waterfall
Laughed all day as it slowly poured
Over the dam by the old mill-ford,
While the tail-race writhed,
and the mill-wheel roared—
Out to old Aunt Mary's.



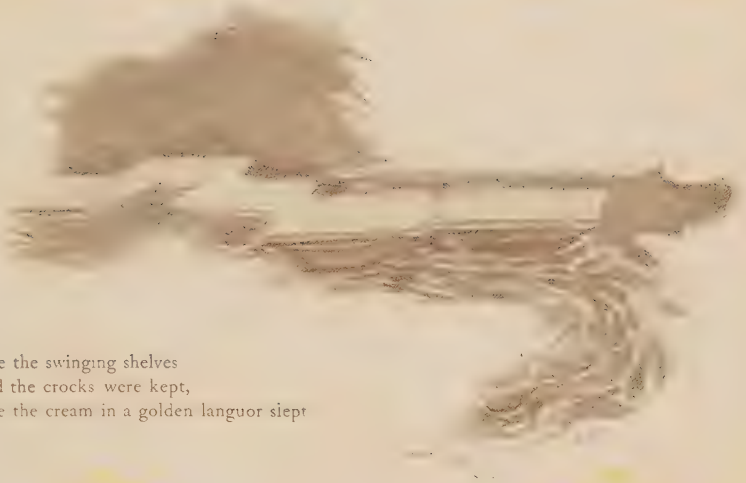


The talks on the back-porch, in the low
Slanting sun and the evening glow

But home, with Aunty in nearer call,
That was the best place, after all!—
The talks on the back-porch, in the low
Slanting sun and the evening glow,
With the voice of counsel that touched us so,
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

And then, in the garden—near the side
Where the bee-hives were and the path was wide.

And then, in the garden—near the side
Where the bee-hives were and the path was wide,—
The apple-house—like a fairy cell—
With the little square door we knew so well,
And the wealth inside
but our tongues could tell—
Out to old Aunt Mary's.



Where the swinging shelves
and the crocks were kept,
Where the cream in a golden languor slept

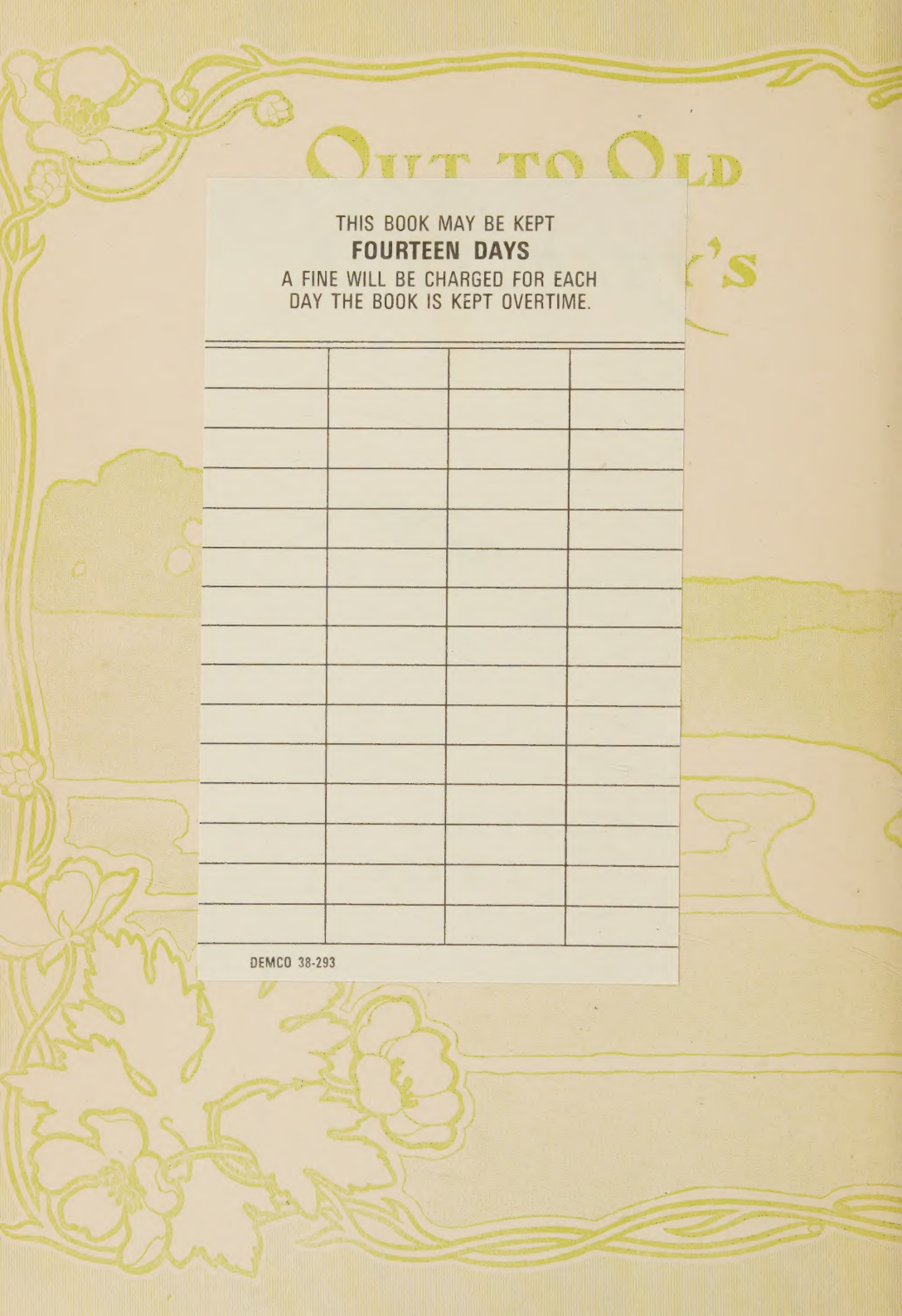
And the old spring-house, in the cool green gloom
Of the willow trees,—and the cooler room
Where the swinging shelves
and the crocks were kept,
Where the cream in a golden languor slept,
While the waters gurgled and laughed
and wept—
Out to old Aunt Mary's.

Memory now is on her knees
Out to old Aunt Mary's -

And as many a time have you and I—
Barefoot boys in the days gone by—
    Knelt, and in tremulous ecstasies
    Dipped our lips into sweets like these,—
    Memory now is on her knees
        Out to old Aunt Mary's.—

. . . . . And all is well
Out to old Aunt Mary's

For, O my brother so far away,
This is to tell you—she waits *to-day*
To welcome us:—Aunt Mary fell
Asleep this morning, whispering, "Tell
The boys to come". . . . . And all is well
Out to old Aunt Mary's.



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